



MEMO



N O R T H C A R O L I N A D I V I S I O N O F
E M E R G E N C Y M A N A G E M E N T

Emergency Management Staff Respond to Explosion at ConAgra Plant

On June 9, shortly before noon, police, fire and emergency management staff responded to an explosion at the ConAgra food processing plant in Garner.

Regional Response Team is comprised of local fire fighters that use a state-owned truck outfitted with specialized equipment and supplies.



NCTF-8 crew crawl through debris with only inches of clearance to search for victims.

“The plant explosion was a good example of state resources standing ready to assist our local partners in their time of need. With an event this big, when lives and property are at stake, we all have to work together for the common goal and I think we did just that,” Amy Ikerd, coordinator for NC Emergency Management Regional Response Team program.

Alan Byrd, the state Emergency Management Area Coordinator for Wake County, arrived on scene early to provide state assistance as needed. Woody Mashburn also was available to help coordinate any state assets.

Within an hour of the explosion, N.C. Urban Search and Rescue Task Force 8 (NCTF-8), comprised of fire fighters from Raleigh, Durham, Cary and Chapel Hill, was on site searching portions of the collapsed facility to find three missing employees. The task force worked for six hours straight - rotating crews every 30 minutes - crawling through rubble in the unstable building while wearing oxygen tanks. Heavy rains temporarily suspended search efforts. Just over 24 hours after the explosion, all three victims had been removed from the building.

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Officials with the U.S. Alcohol Tobacco and Firearm Agency say initial reports indicate the explosion was caused by an accidental natural gas leak in the south side of the building.

“Inside that room, there are several electronic components,” said ATF National Response Team Special Agent in Charge Phil Durham. “There are circuit breakers, lighting, motors, fan motors, etc. Any one of those things could have ignited the natural gas that was released in the room.”

The explosion sparked several fires and caused part of the building to collapse while approximately 300 workers were inside. Most employees were able to escape, but several remained trapped inside.

Garner Fire Department was the first on scene and extinguished the fires within 15 minutes. The big problem was the release of ammonia, which hampered initial search efforts

for victims. Garner requested hazardous material support from the Raleigh Fire Department. A specially-trained hazardous material response team worked to contain the 10,000-12,000 pounds of ammonia released from a 34,000 pound capacity system. One of seven such groups in the state, the

For the past year, NCTF-8 and the Raleigh Hazmat team have been cross training in order to provide more comprehensive response to different types of disasters. Todd Brown, state coordinator of the urban search and rescue program, developed the concept to cross train the specialized teams. He also helped create an exercise in which the two teams could work together to practice integrating hazmat and search and rescue capabilities.

In January, the two groups responded to a staged building collapse in downtown Raleigh that was leaking a toxic chemical. As it turned out, the scenario provided the perfect training for the ConAgra event.

“There is no doubt that the cross training exercise better prepared our crews for the ConAgra fire,” said Brown. “North Carolina is fortunate to have some of the best prepared and most dedicated first responders in the nation.”

More than 60 city, county, state and federal agencies responded to the disaster.



The rear wall of the processing plant collapsed, crushing about a dozen vehicles.

North Carolina Conducts First-Ever Earthquake Exercise



Plans Chief Ed Jenkins (left) briefs Jeff Arndt and Steve Payne on the latest developments from the earthquake.

The N.C. State Emergency Response Team conducted its first ever statewide earthquake exercise June 23-24. The exercise was designed to provide training, evaluate current plans and enhance interagency coordination following a widespread disaster with no advanced notice, such as an earthquake.

“Most disasters that have caused substantial damage in our state have given us some warning,” said Doug Hoell, state emergency management director. “We are experienced preparing for and responding to hurricanes, floods and other disasters that we know may be coming. But, we also need to be prepared to handle those events which could instantly paralyze a small or large region. Bringing local and state agencies together quickly and efficiently will be vital.”

The scenario simulated a 5.8 magnitude earthquake that occurred 5.6 miles southeast of Asheville in the Southern Appalachian Seismic Zone. More than 300 participants from local, state, federal and nonprofit agencies participated in the training event. The participants were located in various areas throughout the state, including the State Emergency Operations Center in Raleigh, 18 western North Carolina counties, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, three universities and two colleges.

All agencies tested their plans for: establishing command and control; providing public information and warning messages; responding to multiple fires and large scale search and rescue missions and others. Participating agencies also worked together to: make the primary infrastructure operational; meet the needs of livestock; coordinate, volunteer activities and donations; and establish emergency communications among first responders across all agencies.



Members of the SERT team discuss the pros and cons of evacuating the earthquake impacted area.

Twenty-two earthquakes have caused damage in North Carolina in 274 years. Of those, seven had epicenters within the state. The last earthquake to impact the state struck Henderson County in 1981. The exercise was paid for with funds from U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

More than 700 Local and State Emergency Responders Train for Disasters



Crews line up equipment and inventory resources.

From June 20-23, N.C. Emergency Management, N.C. National Guard and N.C. Division of Forest Resources conducted a training exercise to test and evaluate their capabilities to process and move resources in and out of the state following a major disaster.

More than 700 local and state emergency responders from more than 20 agencies participated in the four-day event which was held at the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Fairgrounds. Participants included about 350 N.C. National Guard troops, 120 troops from the South Carolina National Guard and more than 100 fire, police, sheriff and rescue personnel from Guilford and Forsyth counties.

The joint reception, staging, onward movement and integration, or JRSOI, site is a critical component of the recovery efforts. During or following a disaster, state emergency management officials can request to borrow or use resources from other states as part of a national emergency management assistance compact. For instance, during the Midwest flooding last summer, North Carolina sent a field hospital and supporting medical staff to Indiana. In 1999, the state received military police and National Guard troops to help with security following Hurricane Floyd.

“Our goal was to test the plan for processing assets that would be transported to or from the state following a major disaster,” said Doug Hoell, Director of NCEM. “We want to be sure we can quickly and efficiently get people food, water, medical help and supplies they need when they will need it most.”

The JRSOI must be able to process, credential, feed and house 500 to 1,000 people daily to effectively manage the need for and use of supplies during a large scale emergency.

The \$50,000 training exercise was being completely funded through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Emergency Management Association.

There are 11 designated JRSOI sites in the state:

- ◆ Global Transpark (Lenoir County)
- ◆ N.C. State Fairgrounds (Wake County)
- ◆ Charlotte Police/Fire Academy (Mecklenburg County)
- ◆ Sen. Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center (Martin County)
- ◆ Lawrence Joel Veteran’s Memorial Coliseum (Forsyth County)
- ◆ Hickory Fairgrounds (Catawba County)
- ◆ Moore County Fairgrounds (Moore County)
- ◆ Western North Carolina Agricultural Center (Henderson County)
- ◆ Wayne County Fairgrounds (Wayne County)
- ◆ Rockingham Motor Speedway (Richmond County)
- ◆ Coast Guard Air Station, Elizabeth City (Pasquotank County)



NCNG members are briefed before being deployed.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services Wins Award

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services Flood Mitigation Program was awarded the 2009 national James Lee Witt Local Award for Excellence in Floodplain Management. The agency, which received the award earlier this year at the State Floodplain Managers National Conference, had what they considered a “watershed” year in 2008.

During the year, they achieved the following:

- ◆ Removed 61 buildings from local floodplains.
- ◆ Relocated 240 families and one daycare facility out of the floodplain.
- ◆ Eliminated structures and personal property worth about \$20 million from local floodplains.
- ◆ Reclaimed more than 30 acres of urban floodplain as open space.
- ◆ Avoided \$3.25 million in flood insurance claims for flood damage to the Cavalier Apartments (The Cavalier Apartments have a long history in flooding problems due to the complex’s location.)
- ◆ Invested \$7.1 million in federal funds and \$10.5 million in local funds to acquire and demolish flood-prone buildings.
- ◆ Requested grant funds to relocate another 170 families (properties worth \$10 million) from the floodplain.

The county program achieved these results through unique buying initiatives and did so without any post-disaster mitigation funding.

The James Lee Witt Local Award for Excellence in Floodplain Management recognizes outstanding programs and activities in floodplain management. City, town and county government agencies are eligible to compete for the award if they have a comprehensive program, specific projects, or activities which epitomize the best practices in floodplain management. Originally called the Tom Lee Award, the name changed to the James Lee Witt Award in 2000 in recognition of the former FEMA director’s efforts to support, enhance and encourage local floodplain management.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg has worked with N.C. Emergency Management to receive FEMA mitigation funds since 1999. During the past 10 years, Charlotte-Mecklenburg has been awarded nearly \$9.5 million in federal disaster mitigation funds and approximately \$10 million in federal non-disaster mitigation funds, which includes pre-disaster mitigation and flood mitigation assistance grants.

Commodities Stocked & Purchasing Capabilities Enhanced to Prepare for Disasters

Having food, water and other basic necessities met is especially critical following disasters. North Carolina Emergency Management is stocking up and taking steps to ensure that it can respond quickly to citizens’ needs in the days and weeks following a major disaster.

The division operates two warehouses that store enough packaged food and bottled water for 50,000 people for one day. The warehouses also stock disaster equipment such as chainsaws, 30 kilowatt generators, material handling equipment, dewatering pumps (used to pump out water from flooded areas), sandbagging machines, sandbags, cots, blankets and six shelter support containers, each capable of providing shelter for 250 people. The warehouses are located in the towns of Badin (Stanley County) and Tarboro (Edgecombe County). The Badin facility is staffed full-time with a manager and an assistant manager who is licensed to drive a tractor trailer. The Tarboro warehouse is staffed during disasters only. Both warehouses provide the capability for immediate response.

The division also maintains 22 disaster contracts with multiple vendors for food, water, ice, generators, material-handling equipment, base camp support and many other goods and services. These contracts provide the capability to quickly purchase supplies, equipment and services. The Division of Purchase and Contract in the Department of Administration provides 27 trained personnel who can make and manage emergency purchases to help Emergency Management staff during disasters. This staff trains and participates in quarterly exercises to maintain readiness.

For more information, contact Paul Latham at 919-733-3767 or platham@ncem.org.

Disaster Assistance for Individuals

Since hurricane season is well under way, it may help to know that disaster assistance is available for individuals if something happens to you, your home or business. Two programs that are key to helping citizens get back on their feet are the Individuals and Households Program and the Other Needs Assistance Program.

Individuals and Households Program

When the president declares a disaster for a county or state, the Individuals and Households Program kicks in, providing financial assistance to those without insurance for lodging expenses, temporary housing, home repair, or (in rare circumstances) household construction. For federal fiscal year 09-10, qualifying individuals can receive up to \$30,300.

To be considered for Individual and Households Program assistance, the affected home must be the individual's primary residence, must be located in the disaster-declared area, cannot be covered by insurance. In addition, the applicant must be a United States citizen, a non-citizen national or a qualified alien who cannot live in the home due to the extensive damage.

Once a disaster has been declared and Individual Assistance authorized, the impacted individuals are instructed to register with FEMA and complete an application for financial assistance. FEMA reviews the application and, if approved, will assign an inspector to view the damaged property.

Other Needs Assistance Program

Through the Other Needs Assistance Program, funds also are available for necessary expenses caused by the disaster such as medical, dental, funeral, personal property, transportation, moving and storage, or other such expenses. This financial assistance is typically cost-shared between FEMA, which pays for 75 percent, and the state, which funds the remaining 25 percent.

An applicant does not apply for Other Needs Assistance but instead is referred for assistance based on their ability to secure a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). If SBA determines that an applicant cannot afford a loan, the agency will automatically refer the applicant back to Other Needs Assistance for additional help.

Applicants with questions about disaster assistance can call the helpline at 1-800-621-FEMA. For information on North Carolina Emergency Management's role in disaster assistance for individuals and businesses, contact Carole Ingram at 919-715-8000, ext 321 or c Ingram@ncem.org.

Trailer Provides Communication Capabilities During Crises

The division has purchased a mobile satellite communications trailer that provides internet and phone capability from remote locations such as operational staging areas. The trailer, which includes a local wireless network for 10 laptop computers and 15 voice-over internet protocol telephones, can be used as a communications center during disasters, or to aid in continuity of operations if an agency had to be evacuated.

It was purchased on June 22, 2007 using U.S. Department of Homeland Security funds.

For more information, contact Paul Latham at 919-733-3767 or platham@ncem.org.

National UASI Conference Held in Charlotte

The 2009 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) conference was held June 9-11 in Charlotte; this is the second consecutive year the national conference was held in the Queen City.

Officials from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), urban regions across the country and numerous state agencies gathered to share best practices and lessons learned in keeping the nation's most populous areas secure.

The conference covered more than 50 topics including how to mass evacuate urban areas and use current technology to enhance public safety. It also offered an opportunity for the 62 recognized UASI regions to share information and strategies to combat terrorism.

The UASI program addresses the multi-disciplinary planning, operations, equipment, training and exercise needs of high-density urban areas that are high-threat to acts of terrorism. The program helps these areas prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from acts of terrorism.

DHS established UASI in 2003 to provide funding support for target-hardening activities based on the area's risk and effectiveness. This year, the Department of Homeland Security provided nearly \$800 million to enhance regional preparedness in major metropolitan areas.

N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety Secretary Reuben Young addressed the group along with Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Fire Chief Jon Hannan and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Rodney Monroe.

Conference sessions included: chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives (CBRNE) response; critical infrastructure protection; interoperable communications; medical planning and program management and many others. More than 75 speakers came from federal, state and local emergency response agencies, as well as the private sector. Approximately 950 participants and 75 vendors attended the conference.

Other CCPS employees who attended the conference include: Chief Deputy Secretary Rudy Rudisill, John Yarboro, Mike Daniska, Mike Cook, Jeff Cardwell, Stewart Coates and Greg Achley.

NC and VA Plan Together for Coastal Evacuation

North Carolina and Virginia's Emergency Management staff met in Chesapeake, VA. on June 10 to discuss plans to evacuate northeastern North Carolina and Southeastern Virginia during a storm. The group meets annually to review evacuation and reentry procedures for coastal residents. Virginia staff also talked about their Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Response (VIPER) website that allows viewers to scroll over a map to view current situations of various events occurring in the state. Virginia's WebEOC interfaces with their VIPER website to provide greater information. The website is <https://cop.vdem.virginia.gov/viper/>

NCEM Logistics Resources Database Is Up and Running

N.C. Emergency Management has developed and implemented a logistics operations management system which integrates inventory control, purchasing capabilities and transportation management functions for the division. This database provides total asset visibility over current logistics processes for all logistics personnel and senior management. The system is web based and accessible from any location with a with internet capabilities.

For more information, contact Paul Latham at 919 - 733-3767 or platham@ncem.org.

L.I.F.E. Ceremony Celebrates Women Leaders in State Government

On June 24, the Leadership Institute for Female Employees (LIFE) recognized 14 ladies for completing a six-month long course. The LIFE program was created in 2005 to strengthen leadership skills of female employees in mid-level management positions in North Carolina state government. Participants are selected from nominations.

The course gives female employees the opportunity to enhance their leadership competencies through a curriculum of courses. The curriculum includes courses on: self-awareness, human capital, conflict resolution, influencing others, valuing equal employment opportunities, diversity and inclusion, strategic thinking, managerial ethics and change management.

The class then demonstrates these course topics by developing a team project. The 2009 class developed a professional network for women in leadership in North Carolina state government.

According to the class, their project was designed to expand professional development opportunities for female leaders in state government using technology-based options. The concept was based on studies that have shown establishing a social professional network positively impacts retention, professional development and promotions for its members.

Emily Young (Emergency Management) and Gwendolyn Burrell (Governor's Crime Commission) were part of the LIFE-4 class.

For more information, contact Emily Young at 919-715-8000 ext 289 or eyoung@ncem.org.



LIFE- 4 Participants (from left): Nellie Riley (Program Coordinator), Gwendolyn Burrell, Andrea Millington, Anne Lasley, Emily Young, Patricia Deal, Vicky Young, Dorothy Vick, Anita McNeil, Jane Price, Judy Stephens, Sheila Holman, Renee Bourget, Charlene Shabazz (Program Manager)



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"In the Business of Saving Lives and Protecting Property"

The North Carolina Division of Emergency Management was formed in 1977 to coordinate the preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities of all agencies for emergency management within North Carolina. It performs this mission by planning, organizing, staffing, equipping, training, testing and activating emergency management programs during times of need.